

A CATHOLIC PILGRIMAGE TOUR TO GREECE & TURKEY

“In The Footsteps of Saint Paul”

Including Athens, Corinth, Cenchrea, Mykonos, Ephesus, Patmos, Crete, Santorini, Delphi, Kalambaka, Meteora, Veria, Thessaloniki, Philippi, Kavala & Istanbul.

Under the spiritual direction of Father Pierre

September 9, 2024 - Monday

DETROIT / GREECE

Our journey begins as we depart Detroit Metro Airport on our departing flight for Greece. Meals are served onboard on our transatlantic flight.

September 10, 2024 - Tuesday

ATHENS

Today we arrive in Athens and are met by our Pilgrimage Tours' tour guide. We proceed to our hotel for check-in, followed by dinner. Overnight in Athens.

September 11, 2024 - Wednesday

ATHENS

Our day of sightseeing begins with a motor coach tour of classical Athens, where we will see such sites as Constitution Square, the House of Parliament, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Temple of Zeus, the Old Olympic Stadium, and the neoclassical buildings of Athens. We arrive at the legendary Acropolis to see the spectacular Parthenon and the Temple of Athena and its Winged Victory statue. We also visit the Areopagus or Mars Hill where Paul was brought before the council and made his famous “Men of Athens” speech on the “Unknown God”. Following Mass at the Bema Seat of Saint Paul, we enjoy free time for lunch, shopping, and personal exploration on the pedestrian friendly Ermou Street. Later in the afternoon we enjoy a visit to Athens' impressive National Archeological Museum, housing many important artifacts from Greek antiquity. Dinner and overnight in Athens.

September 12, 2024 - Thursday

ATHENS / CORINTH / CENCHREA

Today we will drive along the picturesque Corinthian Gulf to Corinth, where the Apostle Paul lived and from where he sent his first and second letters to the Corinthians. We visit the market place where Paul preached to the Corinthians.

We also visit the sixth century BC Temple of Apollo and the Museum of Corinth. Following Mass at the Bema Seat of Saint Paul. We continue on to Cenchrea, the ancient seaport from where Apostle Paul set sail for Ephesus across the Aegean Sea. Later in the afternoon we return to Athens where we will visit the Cathedral of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite (Saint Denis), the seat of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Athens. Finally, we enjoy free time for shopping and personal exploration on the pedestrian friendly Ermou Street. Dinner and overnight in Athens.

September 13, 2024 - Friday

ATHENS / AEGEAN SEA / MYKONOS

This morning we board our cruise ship. During our sailing to Mykonos, we pause for a celebration of Mass. Late afternoon we enjoy dinner aboard our ship, prior to arriving at our first stop, Mykonos. We see a hilly, rock-ribbed island of 29 square miles dotted with more than 350 tiny chapels built by 19th-century pirates to invoke the protection of their patron saints. We visit a fishing harbor with shops and boutiques selling handmade sweaters, dresses, fabrics, jewelry and more at bargain prices. Overnight at Sea.

September 14, 2024 - Saturday

KUSADASI / EPHEBUS / PATMOS

Today we arrive at the port of Kusadasi to enjoy a tour of Ephesus, the best preserved of the original Seven Churches of Revelation. Ancient tradition holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary lived here with Saint John. The Apostle Paul spent two years in Ephesus and wrote his First Letter to the Corinthians here. We celebrate Mass at the House of the Virgin Mary, where Mary spent the final years of her life. Following Mass, we enjoy a sightseeing tour of Ancient Ephesus where we will see among other sites, the Magnesian Gate, the Agora, the Odeon, the Library of Celsus, the Thermal Baths of Scholastica, Trajan's Fountain, the Prytaneum, Hadrian's Temple and the Great Theatre. Our tour concludes with a visit to the Covered Bazaar of Kusadasi with free time for shopping. In the afternoon we sail to the Island of Patmos, where St. John wrote the Book of Revelation. Following dinner on our ship, we disembark the ship for a visit to Patmos, where we will visit Saint John's Monastery and the Grotto of the Apocalypse. We return to our ship for overnight at Sea.

September 15, 2024 - Sunday

CRETE / SANTORINI

This morning we dock in Heraklion, the capital of Crete. The Apostle Paul ended up in Crete because of severe winds (Acts 27:7). A short ride takes us to the fantastic ruins of the Palace of Knossos, which is believed to be the mythical Labyrinth of King Minos. At the Archaeological Museum we will see displays of many of the treasures found during the excavation of this ancient city. Prior to returning to our ship, we gather for a visit and celebration of Mass at the Church of St. John the Baptist. We re-board our ship and sail to Santorini, believed by many to be the most breathtaking of all the Greek isles. Following dinner on

board our ship, we visit Santorini and see the beautiful whitewashed houses, narrow streets and open-air cafes that cling to steep cliffs that are accessible only by cable car or mule. An interesting fact about Santorini is that in recent Minoan excavations, evidence was discovered that have led scientists and archeologists to believe that Santorini may be the fabled lost continent of Atlantis. We depart Santorini for our overnight sailing to Athens. Overnight at Sea.

September 16, 2024 - Monday

ATHENS / DELPHI / KALAMBAKA

Our ship returns to the port of Piraeus where following breakfast onboard we drive to Delphi, the center of the ancient world, the "omphalos" (navel) of the earth - whose prestige extended far beyond the boundaries of the Hellenic world. On the slopes of Mount Parnassos, in a landscape of unparalleled natural beauty and majesty, lies the archaeological site of Delphi. We visit the Temple of Apollo, the Treasury of the Athenians and the Archaeological Museum containing such masterpieces of ancient Greek sculpture as the bronze Charioteer and the famous athlete Aghias. After the tour we continue on to Kalambaka, where we celebrate Mass at our hotel. Dinner and overnight in Kalambaka.

September 17, 2024 - Tuesday

KALAMBAKA / METEORA / VERIA / THESSALONIKI

This morning we depart Kalambaka for a visit to spectacular Meteora with its thousand-year-old Byzantine monasteries perched precariously on huge finger-like rocks, where we enjoy a wonderful view. We continue onto Veria, on the terraced foot of Mount Vernon to see the monument where Paul preached. Following Mass at the Bema Seat of Saint Paul, we drive to Thessaloniki where Paul also preached and sent his first and second letters to the Thessalonians. Dinner and overnight in Thessaloniki.

September 18, 2024 - Wednesday

THESSALONIKI / PHILIPPI / KAVALA

Today we enjoy a panoramic driving tour of Thessaloniki where we will see the White Tower, the Arch of Galerius and the Rotunda standing on the Egnatian Way. We pause at the Old City walls offering a panoramic view of Thessaloniki. In the afternoon we drive to Philippi, where Paul established the first church in Europe. Here we see the ancient forum and jail where Paul & Silas were imprisoned as well as the river where Lydia was baptized. Following Mass at Lydia's Baptistery, we drive to the beautiful port city of Kavala, the ancient city of Neapolis, where Paul landed when he sailed from Troas. Until the early 16th century, Kavala was named Christoupolis, meaning "City of Christ", and was the first European city to accept Christianity. Dinner and overnight in Kavala.

September 19, 2024 - Thursday

KAVALA / ISTANBUL

This morning we drive from Kavala to the Greek-Turkish border, passing the towns of Xanthi, Komotini and Alexandroupolis. We say goodbye to our Greek guide and driver and we continue our journey with our Turkish guide and driver. We continue onto Istanbul, ancient Constantinople, where we arrive at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit for a visit and our celebration of Mass. Dinner and overnight in Istanbul.

September 20, 2024 - Friday

ISTANBUL

Formerly called Byzantium, the center of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire for more than 1,000 years, this city is built on seven green hills and situated astride two continents. We begin our day with a celebration of Mass at the Church of Saint Anthony of Padua. Following Mass, we visit the popular Sultan Ahmed or Blue Mosque with its six minarets and thousands of blue tiles, followed by a visit to the Basilica of Saint Sofia, (Church of the Divine Wisdom), now a museum, converted to a mosque from a Christian church after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. In the afternoon we visit the famous Topkapi Palace with its collection of Ottoman Treasures. This legendary maze of buildings was the residence of the Ottoman sultans and the heart of the Empire. From Seraglio Point we have a wonderful view overlooking the Sea of Marmara. Our afternoon concludes with a visit to Istanbul's Grand Bazaar, a place that exudes the local culture, where numerous merchants have items for sale. This evening we gather for our "farewell dinner" at a local restaurant. Overnight in Istanbul.

September 21, 2024 - Saturday

ISTANBUL / DETROIT

Following Mass this morning, we bid farewell to the ancient New Testament lands of Greece and Turkey and board our direct flight home. Though our pilgrimage draws to a close, its blessings will last a lifetime and its graces are certain to draw us closer to the Lord.